

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS  
CHARTER OF THE  
NATIONAL RESEARCH ADVISORY COUNCIL

A. OFFICIAL DESIGNATION: National Research Advisory Council (NRAC)

B. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY: NRAC provides advice to the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health and makes recommendations on the nature and scope of research and development sponsored and/or conducted by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), to include (1) the policies and projects of the Office of Research and Development (ORD); (2) the focus of research on the high priority health care needs of veterans; (3) the balance of basic, applied, and outcomes research; (4) the scientific merit review process; (5) the appropriate mechanisms by which ORD can leverage its resources to enhance the research financial base; (6) the rapid response to changing health care needs, while maintaining the stability of the research infrastructure; and (7) the protection of human subjects of research.

C. PERIOD OF TIME NECESSARY FOR THE COUNCIL TO CARRY OUT ITS PURPOSE: There is a continuing need for NRAC and no termination date has been set.

D. OFFICIAL TO WHOM THE COUNCIL REPORTS: NRAC reports to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs through the Under Secretary for Health.

E. OFFICE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING THE NECESSARY SUPPORT TO THE COUNCIL: The Veterans Health Administration is responsible for providing support to NRAC.

F. DUTIES OF THE COUNCIL: NRAC (1) advises the Secretary and the Under Secretary for Health on all matters related to the research and development program and (2) conducts analyses and develop reports or other materials as necessary. In order to avoid duplication of effort, NRAC is encouraged to review deliberations of other committees or entities, and may incorporate or otherwise use the results of deliberations of such entities. As a part of its function, NRAC may accept for consideration suggestions for research and development issues from Congress, VA and non-VA scientists, veterans and their representatives, and the general public.

NRAC may establish subcommittees to study and/or evaluate particular aspects of the ORD program. Such subcommittees will operate under clearly defined goals and objectives consistent with the charter. NRAC will notify the Chief Research and Development Officer (CRADO) upon the establishment of each subcommittee and will provide information on the name, membership (including Chair), function, estimated duration, and estimated frequency of meetings of the subcommittee.

NRAC consists of approximately 12 members, including the Chair, appointed by the Secretary. The majority of the Council's members are Special Government Employees. Members will be selected from knowledgeable VA- and non-VA experts, and veterans' community representatives with special qualifications and competence to deal effectively with research and development issues in VA. Appropriate categories of primary expertise that may be represented include (1) basic biomedical research; (2) rehabilitation research and development; (3) health services research and development; (4) clinical research; (5) geriatric care; (6) primary care; (7) special veterans population health issues; (8) occupational and environmental health research; (9) mental health and behavioral research; and (10) surgery. In addition, NRAC will have at least one veteran as a member to ensure an important perspective on the health problems of veterans.

The Secretary will appoint members for overlapping two-year terms of service and may reappoint members for additional terms. The Secretary will appoint the Chair of the Council for a three-year term of service, which is also renewable.

G. ESTIMATED ANNUAL OPERATING COSTS IN DOLLARS AND STAFF YEARS:

The estimated annual cost for operating NRAC is \$100,000 and 0.3 FTE staff years. All members will receive travel expenses and per diem in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulation for any travel made in connection with their duties as members of the council.

H. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF COUNCIL MEETINGS: NRAC will meet about four times per year. The Designated Federal Officer (DFO), a full-time VA employee, will approve the schedule of Council meetings. The DFO or a designee will be present at all meetings, and each meeting will be conducted in accordance with an agenda approved by the DFO. The DFO is authorized to adjourn any meeting when he or she determines it is in the public interest to do so.

I. COUNCIL TERMINATION DATE: None

J. DATE CHARTER IS FILED:

Approved:  Date: 9/27/07  
R. James Nicholson  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs